News Release

Could Your Child Survive a Car Crash?
Parents Can Get Seats Checked to Make Sure

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Each year more than 1,100 visits to an emergency department are made by Utah children under age nine due to motor vehicle crashes. Utah Department of Health (UDOH) injury experts say many are hurt because they aren't properly buckled into a car seat or booster seat. This month, parents across Utah can learn how to buckle their kids and keep them safe during National Child Passenger Safety week.

"It's the responsibility of every parent and caregiver out there to make sure their children are safely restrained–every trip, every time," said Christi Fisher, Director of Safe Kids Utah and a health educator with the UDOH Violence and Injury Prevention Program (VIPP). "When it comes to child safety, there's no room for mistakes."

The week of September 21-27, free car seat checks will be held across the state by Safe Kids Coalitions and local health departments. Certified car seat technicians will be on hand to show parents how to install their seats. Events will be held:

- Saturday, September 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Babies 'R Us (1122 Fort Union Blvd, Midvale)
- Saturday, September 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Wheeler Historic Farm (6351 South 900 East, Murray). Spanish speaking technicians will be available.
- Saturday, September 20 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Sunset City parking lot (85 West 1800 North, Sunset)
- Saturday, September 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center (1034 North 500 West, Provo)
- Saturday, September 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Tooele County Health Department (151 North Main, Tooele)
- Tuesday, September 23 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Babies 'R Us (106 East University Parkway, Orem)
- Wednesday, September 25 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Jorgensen Ford (1000 South Cove View Road, Richfield)

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- Wednesday, September 25 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Syracuse Fire Department (1751 South 2000 West, Syracuse)
- Friday September 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Wasatch County Health Department (55 South 500 East, Heber City)

"Making sure your child's car seat is installed right is one of the best decisions you'll ever make," said Janet Brooks, Safe Kids Utah Vice President and Child Advocate with Primary Children's Medical Center. "Child seats reduce the chance of an infant being killed in a crash by 71 percent and the risk of a toddler being killed by 54 percent. Kids in booster seats are also less likely to be killed (59 percent) than those who are unrestrained."

According to the Utah Department of Public Safety's 2005 Utah Crash Summary, safety restraint usage among children decreases as children grow older. The report shows that 88% of children ages 0-1 were in a child safety seat at the time of a crash, compared to 73% of 2 to 4 year olds, and only 18% of 5 to 8 year olds.

Other tips include:

- Place children in the back seat in a properly installed child safety seat or booster seat. Infants should be restrained in rear-facing child safety seats for as long as possible and at least until age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
- Toddlers should ride in forward-facing child safety seats until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
- By law, children must ride in booster seats until age 8. It's even safer to keep them in boosters until they're 4 feet 9 inches tall, no matter their age.
- Use the car seat instruction manual and the vehicle owner's manual to make sure the car seat is properly installed.
- Send in the car seat registration card so that the manufacturer can contact you about any recalls.
- Replace any car seats that were in use during a motor vehicle crash.

To learn more about child passenger safety, visit www.health.utah.gov/vipp/cpsweek.html or www.utahsafekids.org.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care and promoting healthy lifestyles.